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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HONG KONG 004066

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DEPT FOR EAP AND EAP/CM  
NSC FOR DENNIS WILDER  
FOR G/TIP SENIOR COORDINATOR TAYLOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/13/2031

TAGS: KCRM SMIG SOCI PGOV PHUM HK CH MC MG

SUBJECT: G/TIP OUTREACH TO MACAU GOVERNMENT ON COMBATING  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING

REF: HONG KONG 3970

Classified By: Acting Deputy Principal Officer Laurent Charbonnet. Reasons: 1.4 (b, d).

¶11. (C) Summary: Mark Taylor, Senior Coordinator for the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (G/TIP), accompanied by Gayatri Patel, G/TIP Reports Officer for China, met with government and non-government contacts in Macau September 29-30 to gather information on human trafficking and to assess the Macau Government's efforts to combat the problem. Officials and social workers in Macau showed slightly greater awareness of Macau's trafficking problem; nevertheless, Macau continues to lack a law enforcement response to inbound trafficking and data on trafficking remains sparse. One Macau Government officer requested USG assistance to mature Macau's program to combat trafficking. Several interlocutors also said that organized crime had complicated measures to combat trafficking. End summary.

Macau Government: Pleading for Ideas

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¶12. (C) Taylor met with Patricia Ferreira, Deputy Director of Macau's International Law Office, who acknowledged the trafficking problem in Macau and sought help maturing her Government's program to combat it. Ferreira urged us to build contacts with social welfare associations and to propose practical ideas for Macau's Government to consider and implement. She suggested contacting the Women's General Association of Macau and the Institute of Social Affairs, the latter of which studies trafficking issues of "entertainment industry workers" as well as domestic violence. Ferreira said that one study underway by the "Women's Commission" would evaluate laws relating to women's issues. According to Ferreira, "parallel realities" existed in Macau; the public's view of street life in Macau, versus the casino underworld. Macau's social fabric, acknowledged Ferreira, was highly affected by mafia activities.

¶13. (C) Ferreira said preventative measures on trafficking would require "political authority" from Florinda Chan, the Secretary for Administration and Justice, but that "good

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ideas in practical terms" that were consistent with Macau's laws and realities were also required. She suggested consulting the Commission for Women's Affairs, led by Chan and comprised of both Government and private members, about

its efforts to advise Macau's Government on women's and children's welfare issues.

14. (C) Referring to Macau's legal gambling and prostitution, Ferreira opined that Macau was a "city of sin." If INTERPOL referred trafficking cases to Macau, MSAR police would investigate, but she cautioned that witness protection was not easily guaranteed. "We can't protect them" from the triads and judges are afraid of trying cases involving triad interests, she stated, illustrating this point by stating that judges had to be flown in from Portugal for important anti-triad prosecutions during the MSARG's crackdown on triads in the 1990's. Many non-trafficking crimes in Macau are solved in a matter of minutes because of Macau's extremely effective system of technical street surveillance (cameras, etc.). Additionally, MSAR's Judiciary Police, charged with investigating serious crimes, would sometimes round up groups off the street for "immigration control," followed by 48 hours of detention, and that this afforded the police an opportunity to identify trafficking victims. Ferreira outlined the organization of Macau's police forces: Security Police, responsible for street policing of minor crimes; Judiciary Police, responsible for serious crimes; and the Special Operations Group, responsible for enforcing the most serious and sensitive crimes in Macau. The International Law Office has requested a law requiring the public prosecutor's office to supply statistics about crime investigations, but Ferreira did not seem optimistic that it would be passed soon.

15. (C) Taylor questioned Ferreira about information he had gathered from the Mongolian government and Mongolia-based NGOs claiming that groups of Mongolians had been trafficked into Macau. Ferreira acknowledged the problem, saying it was reported in Macau newspapers. She also, however, questioned why the Mongolian NGOs had not consulted with local churches

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or police. Ferreira noted that trafficking into Macau is not criminalized; only trafficking out of Macau is covered by a criminal statute. She implied the Macau Government was hesitant to crack down on trafficking activities carried out by organized crime interests.

16. (C) Ferreira closed by suggesting that high-level changes, for example in international conventions or treaties related to Macau, might best be sought in consultation with the Government of the People's Republic of China.

Catholic Church and Police on the Beat

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17. (C) Father Lancelot Rodrigues, Director of Catholic Social Services - Macau, said he had "heard very little about trafficking." Rodrigues provided Taylor with a copy of the short 2005 annual report published by the Good Shepherd Centre in Macau, which included statistics on local women "in need of care or protection" as well as information on the group's efforts to improve social workers' ability to deal with cases of sexual violence against women. The report did not go into great detail on categories of cases and did not include a separately identified category for trafficking victims.

18. (C) Ho Peng Nam, a Chief Senior Inspector in the Macau Security Force whose portfolio includes the investigation of immigration cases, said that many foreign workers first arrived in Macau as tourists and then applied for a work visa. He said that workers, after realizing the unexpected or "coerced" circumstances under which they were employed, often reported to the "complaint office" of the Labor Department or Immigration Department. Ho said that businesses complained to police about prostitutes loitering on their premises, and that all complaints were pursued by the police. While NGOs sometimes ask the Government for assistance, Ho explained that the "social department,"

probably referring to the Macau SAR's Social Welfare Bureau, only acted under guidance from the courts. He suggested we attend the late October "Pacific Rim Conference" in Hong Kong, stating that trafficking issues related to immigration would likely arise.

¶9. (C) During a September 30 meeting, Sister Juliana Devoy (strictly protect), the Director of the Good Shepherd Centre, showed us several news clippings from the Chinese-language "Macau Daily News" reporting on alleged trafficking cases. A September 29 article reported a couple from Heilongjiang Province had been arrested in the Lisboa Hotel on September 27 for battery and forcing two PRC girls to engage in prostitution. One of the girls possessed forged mainland travel documents and claimed she was beaten up after being trafficked to Macau via Zhuhai and refusing to prostitute herself; the paper did not detail the circumstances of the second girl. Devoy said that Macau newspapers carried "regular articles about prostitutes being beaten after being reluctant to work," but often did not include many facts about trafficking cases in Macau. She added that organized crime groups were probably involved in many of these cases. Catholic Social Services recently requested statistics on domestic violence -- an issue given considerably greater attention by Macau authorities -- from the Macau police, said Devoy, and was surprised after getting an informative response. Separately, she told Taylor that police had raided a local hotel following complaints by the owner that a group of Thai prostitutes regularly frequented his hotel. Devoy also told us of her effort with Father Michael Sasso to start a "helpline and public awareness campaign" for a mix of social welfare issues, which included trafficking.

¶10. (C) Comment: The rapidly expanding economy and foreign investment in Macau provide both a challenge and an opportunity for anti-trafficking efforts. To date, the forces involved in trafficking -- part of Macau's legacy as a center for Chinese triads -- remain largely unchecked. Macau is trying to overcome its formerly sleepy, laissez-faire reputation and grow into a world-class entertainment and tourism destination; this provides potential motivation for the government to clean up the seamier sides of Macanese society. Clearly, there is much work to be done against trafficking there and Consulate General Hong Kong will continue to press on the Macau government and work with religious groups and NGOs to ensure that trafficking is

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acknowledged and reduced and victims are cared for.

¶11. (SBU) G/TIP has cleared on this cable.  
Cunningham